

U.S. Department of Education
2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 12AL5

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Dr. Brian Clayton Ed.D.

Official School Name: Liberty Middle School

School Mailing Address: 281 Dock Murphy Drive
Madison, AL 35758-7655

County: Madison State School Code Number*: 169-0083

Telephone: (256) 430-0001 E-mail: hbclayton@madisoncity.k12.al.us

Fax: (256) 430-0282 Web site/URL: http://lms.madisoncity.k12.al.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Dee Fowler Ed.D. Superintendent e-mail:
dfowler@madisoncity.k12.al.us

District Name: Madison City Schools District Phone: (256) 464-8370

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Ray White

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
(per district designation): 2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
10 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 8609

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	231	181	412
1	0	0	0		8	199	185	384
2	0	0	0		9	231	217	448
3	0	0	0		10	0	0	0
4	0	0	0		11	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								1244

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
9 % Asian
23 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
65 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 7%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	37
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	46
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	83
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	1114
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.07
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	7

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 2%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 25

Number of non-English languages represented: 8

Specify non-English languages:

Japanese, Korean, Spanish, German, Chinese, Italian, Gujarati, Ukrainian

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16%

Total number of students who qualify: 197

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 7%

Total number of students served: 86

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>12</u> Autism	<u>6</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>9</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>51</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>8</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>5</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>43</u>	<u>3</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>17</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>80</u>	<u>4</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 23:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	92%	97%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other	_____ %
Total	_____ 0%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☐ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award? Before 2007

PART III - SUMMARY

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All refrigerator doors display the things people are most proud of -- a family's snapshots, treasured artwork, and personal successes. Think about what is on your own refrigerator door. Liberty's refrigerator displays a focus on adult and student learning, collaboration, and a student centered environment. Located in Madison, Alabama, we are a shining example of the Madison City Schools' commitment to providing the best educational opportunities for all students. Liberty Middle School's Mission Statement is: Liberty Middle School partnered with community, parents, faculty, and students provides an engaging, diverse curriculum aimed at producing active, self-directed learners for life.

The school culture at Liberty Middle School mirrors that of the city of Madison. Located in northern Alabama, Madison is a fast growing, high-tech city. The Marshall Space Flight Center and the U.S. Army's Redstone Arsenal and Missile Command have a great economic impact on the area, and many high-tech companies are located here. Due to the jobs in the area, the population is highly educated, global in nature and somewhat transient.

At Liberty Middle School, enrollment increases daily. Students transfer from all over the world. There are several non-English speaking students with many different languages represented. Adding to the unique mix is our special education population. The school's design included a well appointed Exceptional Learning Center (ELC). Liberty welcomes all students, and we celebrate our diversity. Even though we are diverse, we pride ourselves on being a part of one team-"Team Lion."

Liberty prides itself on our positive culture that focuses on our students. We have been a School Wide Positive Strategies school since 2002. We celebrate successes and recognize efforts of our students and teachers weekly. Our school has an active Peer Mediation program, and this year, we have formed a mentoring program for our male students called the Ready yoUrself For the Future (RUFF) program. This program is designed to enhance leadership, personal and academic potential of the young men at Liberty. We have participated in Challenge Day the last two years in order to promote a culture where diversity is celebrated, and students feel safe and loved.

At the heart of the school is a dedicated staff of professional teachers who want to continue to grow and learn in order to reach and teach our students. We are an Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) and Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) demonstration site. Each month through embedded professional development, teacher leadership teams collaborate on ways to challenge and reach our students. As a result, we are experiencing a shift in our focus. We have moved away from focusing on teaching to focusing on learning. Liberty was honored to be named an Impact School this year. According to Jim Knight in his book, Unmistakable Impact, an Impact School exhibits a commitment to partnerships, reflection, coaching, learning teams, communication, research, and learning targets. We were asked to produce a video for other schools in our state showcasing Liberty as an Impact School. This video has been shared through the Key Leaders Network with educators across our state. Thus began our display on our refrigerator door.

We are proud to say that we are in the Top 5 of the highest test scores in the state of Alabama for our students SAT scores. We continue to improve each year, and make all our AYP goals. This is attributed to our focus on student learning.

The school's facilities and equipment also reflect its mission. The ELC is an entire wing of the building. Classrooms were constructed with special restroom accommodations, covered entryways for special education buses, an open activity room for adaptive physical education and ample space for occupational and physical therapies. This large area is used by classes to allow groups to perform, speakers to share, and students to share projects.

Technology is a way of life at Liberty. Each classroom either has a SmartBoard, a projector, or a Gateway Destination. We have a Distance Learning Lab used for virtual field trips, several laptop carts, computer labs, and iPad carts. Teachers use technology in innovative ways to help reach students. These carts and labs are in constant use. Teachers continually utilize Skype and Twitter to engage their students. In the ELC, assistive technology devices help non-verbal students communicate with teachers and peers. Parents are accessing their child's homework from home thanks to Internet Information on Demand (IIOB). Liberty is truly on the cutting edge of technology.

In summary, Liberty is an innovative, progressive school where every student is valued. No matter at what academic or social level a student enters, the faculty and staff are committed to extending each student's abilities as far as possible. Our students excel individually while caring for each other. Step forward and take a closer look at the artifacts on our refrigerator door!

1. Assessment Results:

Liberty Middle School works persistently to meet and exceed state assessment standards. Students participate in several state assessments throughout the year to measure student achievement. The Stanford Achievement Test 10th Edition (SAT10) and the Alabama Reading and Math Test (ARMT) are administered to all 7th and 8th graders. The SAT10 determines student progress in Reading, Language and Math. The ARMT is a criterion-referenced test that involves questions from the SAT10. Students are scored based upon performance of a Level I, II, III, or IV on the ARMT. Level I indicates the student did not meet the academic content standards; Level II indicates the student partially met state academic standard; Level III indicates the student met state academic standards; and Level IV indicates the student exceeded academic content standards established by the state. In order for the student to be considered proficient under the No Child Left Behind guidelines, students must score in Level III and IV on the ARMT.

B. Liberty Middle School uses assessment results to focus on instruction. We have maintained Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past five years. 97% of our students in the 7th grade were proficient in reading (a 2% gain from 2007-08) and 95% proficient in math (a 7% gain from 2007-08). 94% of our students in the 8th grade were proficient in reading (a 5% gain from 2007-08) and 94% proficient in math (a 7% gain from 2007-08). One continuous improvement goal has been to consistently increase the percentage of students scoring a Level IV on the ARMT.

In 2007-08, on ARMT Reading, 63% of 8th graders and 73% of 7 graders scored a Level IV. On ARMT Math 45% of 8th graders and 55% of 7th graders scored a Level IV. In 2010-11, on ARMT Reading, 75% of 8th graders and 82% of 7th graders scored a Level IV, showing an increase of 12% for 8th grade and a 9% increase for 7th grade. On ARMT Math, 62% of 8th graders and 68% of 7th graders scored a Level IV, showing an increase of 17% for 8th grade and 13% for 7th grade. In SAT10 math, 7th and 8th graders have scored above the 80th percentile from 2007-08 to present. In 2007-08, 7th graders' scores ranked in the 81st percentile in math. In 2010-11, 7th graders scores increased by 5% to 86%. Our 8th grade math scores for 2007-08 SAT10 were 81%. In 2010-11 8th graders scored 85% in math with an increase of 4%.

Our 7th and 8th graders scored above the 70th percentile in SAT10 Reading for the past five years. Looking at disaggregated data, we identified areas for improvement in order to reach all students. In 2007-08, black 7th graders scored 61% in reading while our white 7th graders scored 82%, a difference of 21%. During the 2010-11 year, black 7th graders scored 67% while white graders scored 85%, closing the gap by 3%. In 2007-08 on SAT10 Reading black 8th graders scored 52% while white 8th graders scored 78%. In 2010-11, black 8th graders scored 57% in reading and whites 82%, showing a 1% increase.

Specific subgroups were identified as a result of longitudinal studies and targeted to help close the achievement gap. For example, we identified our free and reduced students as a targeted subgroup three years ago. Teachers were trained on the effects of poverty and ways to reach this group. We also identified all students who scored a Level II in reading and/or math on the ARMT and targeted for specific help in each area. In both math and reading, we are providing small group instruction, individualized instruction, Tier III instruction in reading, and tutors teaming with math teachers in classrooms. We made significant gains in closing our achievement gap in several areas as a result of this focus. The percentages of students achieving proficiency in reading and math over the past five years are as follows: 7th grade black students = 5.4% gain in reading and 3.91% gain in math; 8th grade black students = 7.43% gain in reading and 5.75% gain in math; 7th grade free & reduced students = 8.46% gain in reading and 3.47% gain in math ; 8th grade free & reduced students = 1.32% gain in reading and - 1.53% in math; 7th grade special education students = 20.44% gain in reading and 4.09% gain in math; and 8th grade special education students = 16.5% gain in reading and 4.5% gain in math.

Information regarding the state's assessment program is available on the Alabama State Department of Education website: www.alsde.edu.

2. Using Assessment Results:

a) At Liberty Middle School, data guides our instruction. To begin the school year, our faculty meets to analyze assessment results. The results of the ARMT and the SAT10 are reviewed. Teachers from core content areas develop data notebooks in which they keep assessment results on each student. Teachers identify areas in which improvement is needed in order to become more proficient. Using the data, teachers create small groups based on the areas of weakness for all students – not just strugglers. During small group lessons, students are able to pose questions, reflect on responses, and gain a better knowledge of specified skills. Teachers formulate lessons/activities that will narrow the gap between proficiency and mastery. On-going formative assessment is used to identify individual, classroom, and grade level needs.

The principal and language arts and math teachers confer to analyze their students' assessment results. The purpose is to form a partnership to improve teaching and learning. Together they find patterns and trends in areas for instructional growth for the upcoming school year based on the previous year's assessment data. Forming these partnerships aids the teacher and principal, who is the instructional leader, to assist in improving student achievement.

Students scoring in the below average range in reading on the SAT10, and performing at a Level II on the ARMT reading are assessed for our reading intervention program, LANGUAGE!. LANGUAGE! is a comprehensive literacy curriculum with mastery-based language arts intervention that targets the needs of non-readers, struggling readers, and English as a Second Language learners. Its goal is to accelerate students to grade-level proficiency by utilizing a sequential, cumulative, skill-based instructional format that addresses all learning styles. The LANGUAGE! Reading Scale Placement Test (LRS) is given to the entire class or designated students prior to beginning LANGUAGE! instruction. Based on the Lexile Readability Scale, this assessment is a comprehensive tool identifying the weaknesses of individual students and determining (along with district criteria) the appropriate entry points into instruction. The baseline tests are administered prior to entering the curriculum. These tests give teachers a baseline indicator of students' skills, which can be used to measure growth as students progress through the curriculum. Baseline tests include fluency, spelling, comprehension and writing.

b) Liberty Middle School believes that partnering with our stakeholders is a vital part of our thriving school. We communicate our success to our community and parents in order share our accomplishments. Each summer, during schedule pick up, students and parents are given a Home Report of the ARMT and SAT10 for the individual student. A school administrator, counselor, or teacher is on hand to discuss or explain the results to the parents and students. Results that are not picked up by the parent or guardian are mailed to students' homes. During the parent open house, our instructional coach shares whole school assessment data for the community and parents.

Teachers in language arts and math conference individually with students early in the school year in order to establish personal areas of growth and to set goals for the year for improvement. Scheduled parent-teacher conferences are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the year to communicate assessment results and academic achievement in various content areas. Counselors hold parent nights for the EXLORE and PSAT assessments to help parents to understand individual student reports. Our counselors and administrators are available to conference with parents and students regarding academic progress. The school district has a web-based program that allows parents to check students' academic progress regularly using an assigned PIN to access student data. Our school sends progress reports home every three weeks in order to keep parents informed. We send report cards home every nine weeks (quarterly) to report students' academic progress.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Liberty is becoming part of numerous professional learning networks across our state and nation. This year, our school was asked to produce a video to be shared with the Key Leaders Network for the Alabama Best Practices Center. Superintendents, principals, and instructional leaders across our state viewed our example of what it takes to be an Impact School. We showcased our focus on collaboration, partnerships, shared instructional targets, and learning teams in order ensure excellent instruction everyday in every classroom. It may be viewed at: <http://vimeo.com/33307421>

Liberty has formed a partnership with Homewood Middle School in Homewood, Alabama to share strategies on strategic teaching and student engagement. We have each participated in walk -throughs in each other's schools. Through this partnership, our schools have gained numerous ideas and strategies to be implemented in our classrooms. Liberty works closely with our sister middle school, Discovery. Together we also participate in monthly walk- throughs in order to grow and learn. Our school is part of the Instructional Partner pilot through the Alabama State Department of Education. Our Instructional Coach shares best practices ranging from forming and implementing small groups, technology integration, peer coaching, and strategies to increase student engagement. She has had the opportunity to present classroom lessons about the gradual release of responsibility at the Powerful Conversation Network meetings. The network is comprised of elementary and secondary educators from across our state. Numerous classroom teachers facilitate district level professional development on topics that include: Twitter for classroom use, effective classroom management, technology integration (SmartBoard, iPads, cell phones as mobile learning devices, Wikis, Google Docs, student information systems, Moodle, interactive websites) and successful strategies for working with ELL students.

Liberty Middle School has been featured in many print and media sources including The Huntsville Times, Madison Spirit, and Madison County Record. Features include academic successes of our students, partnerships formed to improve instruction, as well as, our extra curricular activities. More recently, Liberty Middle School gained national attention from both the TV news show Right This Minute and The New York Times editorial page with our video, "I am Human," which promotes acceptance of diversity and developing a positive school culture. This video, which was produced by the Liberty Middle School Broadcasting class can viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJymVGJ3Eag>

We believe in sharing best practices in order for everyone to grow. Reciprocal learning is a result of these experiences. We learn from each other as we share our lessons learned.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Our families and community support our endeavors. In return, they give back to us. One way we utilize our community is through our annual Career Day. Community members are invited to share their expertise in a vast array of careers. Each teacher seeks a community member as a speaker for this program. Careers range from: fire fighters, health care professionals, military, builders, real estate agents, municipal and elected officials, veterinarians, caterers, fine arts careers, engineers. And yes, rocket scientists. Students have the opportunity to select three professions to learn more about. This is huge tradition in our school that all stakeholders participate and look forward to. As a result, partnerships are formed due to this invitation to work with our students. This involvement of the community results in a partnership, and many speakers come back to conduct extension activities.

Our school's Parent and Teacher Association work diligently to create a positive environment for both teachers and students. Parents are encouraged to volunteer their time and talents in our school. Monthly meetings encourage continued parent involvement through various programs. Our PTA endorses educational success through strong parent, family, and community involvement.

Ready yoUrself For the Future (R.U.F.F.) is an extension of a mentoring program from one of our elementary schools that we are extremely proud of at Liberty. R.U.F.F. is a program designed to enhance the leadership, personal, and academic potential of the young men at Liberty, as well as, encouraging accountability and responsibility. Bi-weekly interactive seminars and thoughtful, sincere discussions are led by the teachers spearheading this initiative along with community guest facilitators. Students in R.U.F.F participate in field trips that integrate the cultural aspect of our community such as concerts and museums.

A partnership with military families, to foster smooth transitions, has been developed through the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) grant. Tutors are provided and utilized in multiple math classrooms. Teachers and tutors collaborate and partner to ensure that each student is getting the individualized and small group instruction they need. Tutors work with groups of students that are from military families and other students as needed. This has proven to be a successful venture.

Teachers communicate with families weekly. Positive postcards are mailed each week to at least two students per teacher highlighting personal successes. We believe that a kind gesture is essential in promoting educational and social successes. These go on their refrigerator door!

1. Curriculum:

Another item on our refrigerator door is our focus on student learning. Liberty Middle School is on a modified block schedule in order to promote student success. Courses offered support a variety of academic interests and needs. As a middle school, we strive to offer relevant classes that promote a variety of talents and thinking skills.

Our core classes are on the block schedule and include Social Studies, Math, Science, and Language Arts. Our elective classes are on periods and include Computer Applications and Visual Arts for 7th grade, Career Technology and Performing Arts for 8th grade. Spanish, Personal Finance, Business Technology, and Junior ROTC are offered for 9th grade. Our 9th grade students can also participate in a Biomedical Science class that is taught at our high school, Bob Jones. Our 7th and 8th graders are required to take Physical Education each year. Any grade can participate in Choir and Band. Our 8th and 9th graders can take French I and II and Beginning Broadcasting. Students who are not performing at the desired level take the Language! class.

Social Studies: Our 7th graders take nine weeks of Civics and nine weeks of Geography. Junior Achievement is a part of this curriculum. It is dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs. Students in social studies classes also participate in the Economics Extravaganza. Students participate in simulations of macroeconomics, microeconomics, personal economics, and international economics. Our 8th graders complete a class of Ancient Civilization. Our 9th graders take World History. All instruction incorporates critical thinking, analysis of primary source documents and thematic analysis of eras.

Math: Students are required to take math each year. Students can opt to take honors classes to include: Pre-Algebra in 7th grade, Pre-Algebra and Honors Algebra I for which a high school credit in 8th grade. Our 9th graders can take Algebra I A and B, Honors Geometry, Algebraic Connections, and Algebra II/Trigonometry. AMSTI units are often a part of the curriculum. Students are challenged to apply their math skills and apply critical thinking skills to problem solving situations. The math department uses open-ended questions to stress the understanding and reasoning behind mathematical concepts.

Science: Students are required to take Life Science in 7th grade. In 8th grade, students take Physical Science that includes Chemistry and Physics. Our 9th graders can take Biology or Honors Biology. Students are challenged to think critically about scientific data and the implications of science on society through inquiry-based instruction. AMSTI and Science in Motion provide numerous hands-on activities to enhance and reinforce content learning. We collaborate with Hudson Alpha, NASA, and other local industries to provide real world and career experiences. We also collaborate with UAH for extension lessons. College students work with 8th grade classes to develop their own projects for real world application. We believe in taking the classroom to the real world.

English: Language Arts is required for all of our students. Honors classes are offered at the all three grade levels. Our 9th graders take Freshman Composition and English 9. Students are encouraged to focus on critical reading and writing skills. In addition, students demonstrate research and presentation techniques. Novels, short stories, and poetry are analyzed. Students compose essays in the four standard modes, along with poetry and short stories. Freshman Composition explores real life writing experiences including: business letters, resumes, reviews, and college applications.

Our curriculum is designed in order to prepare students for college and career by providing rigorous classes focusing on higher order thinking skills.

2. Reading/English:

At Liberty, teachers meet children where they are, identify strengths and weaknesses of concepts in order to teach effectively, and scaffold content instruction to build confidence. Our Language Arts curriculum is driven by the Alabama State Course of Study and district checklists. A vertically aligned secondary curriculum ensures students enter and leave each grade having mastered key concepts. However, motivated to create life-long readers and learners, teachers set a standard beyond these basic requirements.

Reading and writing are critical for students' success. Students thus take a block class of Language Arts all year long. Our 9th grade students take a semester of English and a semester of Freshman Composition with a special emphasis on technology. All grades offer advanced Language Arts classes designed to challenge gifted students with test scores above the 80th percentile. However, these classes are open to any student desiring a challenge. All grades offer inclusion classes. As previously discussed in this application, students who score below average on the Reading SAT10 and below Level III on ARMT Reading are referred to Language!, a reading intervention program.

In order for students to reach their maximum potential, teachers begin by examining individual student test data. As the year progresses, instructors target students' needs through small group instruction. Teachers use various strategies for managing fluid groups according to students' needs. We also utilize USA Test Prep, Renaissance Learning, and Successmaker as progress monitoring tools.

Teachers work together to develop a highly engaging, relevant curriculum. As an ARI school, we employ strategies to engage our students. Classes study contemporary young adult novels and classics. On any given day, whole class, literature circle, and individual choice reading can be observed. Students read, reflect, discuss, and write to construct personal meaning. Teachers utilize the strategic teaching model of clear before, during, and after reading strategies. Writing instruction is scaffolded. Teachers initially focus on descriptive writing to improve all modes. Classes utilize modeling, graphic organizers, sentence starters, word walls, and editing workshops. Vocabulary instruction is also deliberate, with special emphasis on identifying context clues and deciphering words by their Greek and Latin word parts.

Twenty-first century students must be confident and responsible with technology. Students learn how to effectively and responsibly navigate the Internet and academic databases. Students write the traditional research report, but they also research to participate in highly engaging debates, wikis, speeches, and media projects.

3. Mathematics:

Our math department is made up of strategic teachers who develop lessons using a gradual release of responsibility, modeling before, during, and after strategies. This approach engages all students and increases rigor in their learning. Teachers model methods and procedures for the students, work with students, and allow students to work with each other toward the ultimate goal of independent work demonstrating mastery.

Strategic teaching is encouraged through collaboration. Peer coaching is used to continually mold and adjust our methods in the classroom. As peer partners, we visit each other's classrooms, provide positive feedback, and discuss identified areas of improvement. This process enhances our teaching skills and helps unify our department. We also work as a team to develop pacing guides for common courses and give common assessments at least once per quarter. This ensures consistency in assessment within the department and helps prepare for the upcoming alignment with the National Common Core Standards.

We utilize data and research-based strategies in our classrooms. Data, based on summative and formative assessments, assists teachers in making choices about how to differentiate their instruction, how small

groups should be formed and when to provide one-on-one instruction. Through a grant from the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA), tutors are utilized in classrooms multiple times each week. The math department has also been awarded a grant through the Aviation and Missile Research Development, and Engineering Center for Dimension M through nCASE. This grant has provided training and software to address student needs using student-friendly formats, such as, games and multimedia presentations.

Liberty Middle School is an Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) school aimed at strengthening and supporting our instruction. All of our math teachers have attended AMSTI training which focuses on the use of manipulatives, inquiry-based learning, and the 5E model—engage, explore, explain, extend and evaluate. Within this model, students engage in activity based learning which produces higher order thinking and reasoning skills.

Students are encouraged to take advanced courses based on specified criteria. For instance, 7th graders are given the opportunity to take honors Pre-Algebra. In this setting, the curriculum is enriched and paced to provide an opportunity for students to learn topics that are interesting and more challenging to them, as well as, the objectives essential for the course. Similar advanced courses are offered at each grade level. All students are encouraged and challenged to meet their full potential.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Liberty science employs every resource to meet student needs. Our goal is to equip them for membership and leadership in a global learning community, increasingly ready to meet the challenges of a changing world. Through AMSTI and Science in Motion, our teachers have the highest quality professional training, materials and support as they bring the latest in hands-on, lab-based instruction to our students. Highly challenging curriculum is provided to all students and in addition, Honors classes and a Bio-Medical strand of courses add even greater rigor to the course of study.

Technology is a vital part of instruction. The extensive student use of computer software, probe ware, flex cams, online labs, eChalk, and other applications allows research, presentation of findings and exploration of learning in new innovative formats. Students are challenged to be critical problem solvers as they gain confidence in their ability to explore, work within collaborative teams and direct their own learning.

Students are analyzing carbon levels in the trees of our school yard or searching for meaningful ways to reduce human impact on our local wetlands, but they are always being asked to think beyond the textbook and into the world.

We work closely with local universities and industries to extend the science experience. Graduate students have worked with our 8th grade classes to a design hot air balloon to carry experiments planned and implemented by our students. Through the GLOBE program students have monitored and reported on a variety of local environmental factors. Support has come from Hudson Alpha, a genetics research corporation in our community. They provide modules for 7th grade classes, as well as teacher training. 9th grade students visit the Hudson Alpha facility, performing laboratory investigations and interacting with scientists in a real world setting. They explore the historical development of molecular science, current trends in research and career possibilities in this field. Similarly, through NASA our students have the chance to be part of the space program. Speakers bring hands-on experiences to all grade levels with topics specifically tailored to match curricular needs and extend understanding of major concepts.

Beyond the classroom, our students travel with teachers and parents to Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Camp McDowell for coastal ecology and environmental studies. Science Fairs at all levels are a major part of their learning. Science Olympiad, BEST Robotics and a Rocketry Club offer further avenues for practicing real world science.

5. Instructional Methods:

Liberty Middle School teachers recognize that students learn differently. Therefore, differentiated instruction is applied in all classrooms. Research based strategies and tools are implemented to not only differentiate but to also target the diverse needs of our subgroups. At the core of this is small group instruction. Professional Development sessions (PDs) were provided to establish small group instruction, targeting specifically students who scored a 2 or below on the ARMT in reading and/or math. Teachers provided documentation of progression to administration and curriculum leaders regularly, and were provided support at monthly PDs focusing on targeted reading and math strategies and management tools for conducting small groups. Collaboration was essential in this process among teachers to ensure each weakness for each child was adequately reviewed.

PDs system-wide also established the importance of formative assessment as a differentiation tool. Liberty curriculum leaders modeled and provided ideas and lessons to teachers. Teachers also enforced strategic teaching whole and small group using peer coaching. Faculty supported each other with observations and feedback.

Liberty Middle School teachers also utilize other innovative instructional tools through technology to ensure differentiation of subgroups. LCD projectors or SmartBoards are provided in most classrooms. Classroom Performance Systems (CPS) with clickers are used in many classrooms such as math and social studies. Students also have access to computer labs, laptop carts and I-Pad carts. Teachers use cell phones, I-Pads and/or I-Pods for APP implementation of such programs as “studyblue” and “quizlet” to allow students to take and read notes anywhere, at anytime. A school-wide U:Drive provides students with at-home access to documents and programs created while at school. Also the custom of class Moodle pages, allow teachers and students to post assignments, provide electronic assessments and access to class notes and materials.

All of these factors allow our students the capability to achieve their utmost. This is success!

6. Professional Development:

Liberty Middle School prides itself on job embedded professional development. This is at the center of our refrigerator door. Our school believes in growing teacher-leaders to lead teams. We have embedded professional development sessions each month in which the instructional coach and team leaders facilitate. Our focus this year is on Strategic Teaching. We are learning together how to plan purposeful lessons that relate to our lessons’ learning targets and using research-based strategies before, during, and after instruction that correlate. Each month, our grade level and department teams meet, extending our learning through collaborating and sharing together best practices.

This year, we have embarked on a new learning adventure. Our entire faculty is paired and is peer coaching each other. Each month, the pairs hold a pre-conference, an observation, and a post-conference in order to improve teacher and student learning. The pairs observe each other on the aspect of the lesson that we are concentrating on for the month. Two teachers, the Instructional Coach, and Assistant Principal attend Powerful Conversations led by the Alabama Best Practices Center. Our Principal attends Key Leaders through the same organization. These meetings are held four times a year. When these educators return from the sessions, turn around training is presented to our entire faculty. From these sessions, we are acquiring theory and practical ways of implementing formative assessment and the gradual release of responsibility. We were honored to be asked to produce a video for the Key Leaders Network. This showcased our success with being an Impact School which fosters a culture of learning for teachers and students. Our Principal also attends professional development with principals from several districts through the Principally Speaking Network.

Researching and learning together is the key to school improvement and growth. As a faculty, we study a variety of books aimed on improving our school culture and student achievement. We have collaborated and studied books on rigor, school culture, poverty, writing, and becoming teacher leaders. Within our departments, we analyze data and collaborate on ways to use the data to drive our instruction. Each

department also goes outside our district to attend sessions that are content specific. These include: Council of Leadership in Alabama Schools (CLAS), Dimension M, Alabama Math Science and Technology, Alabama Education Technology Conference, Developing Teachers as Historians, and other workshops through our local in-service center.

7. School Leadership:

Our school leadership at Liberty Middle School is one that leads through example. Our team of administrators, counselors, and instructional coach believe that they are not able to lead in the learning the building if they are not learners themselves. Our leaders are participants in the learning that occurs every day at Liberty Middle. The team is focused on the learning process while making the learning fun for all. The leaders of our building are visible during the daily routines of the school but also do not mind “digging in” to a lesson such as a lab dissection. The team participates in all professional development that occurs at Liberty including leading book studies and modeling best practices. Our instructional coach embraces the use of professional development to enhance the practice of strategic teaching in all facets of instruction, and the leaders go to great lengths to protect the instructional time of the teachers. Events on the calendar are planned well in advance to make sure that students and teachers are aware and can make preparations for the time away from instruction. Furthermore, the expectation of excellence pervades the climate at Liberty. The leadership of the building spends hours in classrooms giving teachers feedback on the instructional practices that are observed. This feedback is formative and is not used as an evaluation tool.

The leadership at Liberty believes in growing teacher leaders. Teachers are given the opportunity to lead, share, collaborate, and work together to benefit instruction. The leadership at Liberty values teacher input, encourages collaboration, and provides the vehicle for teachers to grow.

The collaborative culture at Liberty is pervasive throughout the building. We learned, through the book, *Fish!*, the power of team work. Each day, the leaders in our building strive to “Be There,” “Make Their Day,” “Choose Your Attitude,” and “Play.” It is as if the feeling of camaraderie is embedded in the walls of the building. No matter the make up of the leadership team, the feeling of partnerships between leaders, teachers, and students is present.

The leadership teams are the magnets on our refrigerator door holding up the things of which we are most proud. They are the first ones to proudly grab you by the hand, walk you to the refrigerator door in order to brag about Liberty Middle School.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Publisher: Harcourt Brace

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds	95	91	90	87	84
Exceeds	68	62	58	55	58
Number of students tested	361	376	374	329	315
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	2	3	3	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets and Exceeds	85	71	74	63	67
Exceeds	33	28	27	24	18
Number of students tested	65	64	56	46	50
2. African American Students					
Meets and Exceeds	87	87	76	68	68
Exceeds	42	41	37	26	31
Number of students tested	76	82	75	66	66
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets and Exceeds	52	44	43	37	34
Exceeds	17	22	30	5	17
Number of students tested	22	23	22	20	38
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL5

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Publisher: Harcourt

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds	97	96	93	95	91
Exceeds	82	78	75	74	75
Number of students tested	359	374	371	327	315
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	3	2	3	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets and Exceeds	92	85	80	83	80
Exceeds	65	38	42	50	45
Number of students tested	65	64	56	46	49
2. African American Students					
Meets and Exceeds	94	90	85	87	79
Exceeds	62	55	47	49	51
Number of students tested	75	82	68	66	67
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets and Exceeds	78	65	48	48	56
Exceeds	26	22	26	16	28
Number of students tested	22	22	20	20	36
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL5

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 8 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Publisher: Harcourt

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds	94	95	92	87	90
Exceeds	62	53	55	46	50
Number of students tested	402	391	344	340	310
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	2	3	2	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets and Exceeds	77	83	84	57	73
Exceeds	29	17	34	0	17
Number of students tested	56	59	58	48	37
2. African American Students					
Meets and Exceeds	89	84	81	67	76
Exceeds	38	28	29	21	24
Number of students tested	88	78	69	82	56
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets and Exceeds	54	50	52	37	39
Exceeds	27	25	5	5	9
Number of students tested	20	20	21	37	22
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL5

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8 Test: Alabama Reading and Math Test

Edition/Publication Year: 1st Publisher: Harcourt

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds	95	92	90	90	91
Exceeds	75	69	61	63	75
Number of students tested	398	389	341	340	310
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	3	3	2	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets and Exceeds	76	76	83	74	75
Exceeds	27	27	33	29	22
Number of students tested	60	58	58	48	37
2. African American Students					
Meets and Exceeds	89	84	79	79	78
Exceeds	47	37	30	42	35
Number of students tested	88	78	68	82	56
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Meets and Exceeds	59	40	42	68	48
Exceeds	27	30	5	19	13
Number of students tested	24	19	20	37	25
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12AL5

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds	94	93	90	87	86
Exceeds	64	57	56	50	54
Number of students tested	763	767	718	669	625
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	4	6	5	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets and Exceeds	81	76	79	59	69
Exceeds	31	22	30	11	17
Number of students tested	121	123	114	94	87
2. African American Students					
Meets and Exceeds	88	85	78	67	71
Exceeds	39	34	33	23	27
Number of students tested	164	160	144	148	122
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Meets and Exceeds	52	46	47	37	35
Exceeds	21	23	17	5	14
Number of students tested	42	43	43	57	60
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12AL5

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets and Exceeds	95	93	91	92	91
Exceeds	78	73	68	68	75
Number of students tested	757	763	712	667	625
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	6	6	5	5	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets and Exceeds	84	80	81	78	77
Exceeds	46	32	37	39	35
Number of students tested	125	122	114	94	86
2. African American Students					
Meets and Exceeds	91	87	82	82	78
Exceeds	53	46	38	45	43
Number of students tested	163	160	136	148	123
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Meets and Exceeds	68	53	45	60	52
Exceeds	26	25	15	17	21
Number of students tested	46	41	40	57	61
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Meets and Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12AL5